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Book Review of *Just One Vote: From Jim Walding's Nomination to Constitutional Defeat* by Ian Stewart.

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Just One Vote: From Jim Walding's Nomination to Constitutional Defeat. By Ian Stewart. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009. xii + 282 pp. Maps, tables, illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.95 paper.

This story is almost Shakespearean in its dramatic proportions. It includes an overly ambitious politician frustrated by his leader's refusal to make him a cabinet minister, an even more ambitious politician's wife pushing him beyond his abilities and fostering his bitterness, and a government leader faced with a difficult colleague whose actions brought down the government, led to the leader's resignation, and almost destroyed a political party.

Just One Vote is a welcome addition to the already significant Canadian literature on the New Democratic Party of Manitoba. The attention paid to this subject reflects the party's democratic socialist ideology and its domination of provincial politics for much of the past 40 years, including Manitoba's current government.

Jim Walding, the main character of the story Ian Stewart tells, was first elected in a by-election in 1971. Appointed Speaker of the legislature more than a decade later, his actions prevented the government of Premier Howard Pawley from pushing ahead, in 1983 and 1984, with a constitutional package that would have recognized the legal equality of the French and English languages. Walding allowed the Conservative opposition to block

the government's package, in part because he personally opposed its proposals.

In 1988, no longer Speaker, Walding's vote in the legislature was enough to bring down the Pawley government by one vote and force an election. Held at an inopportune time for the NDP, midway through its term in office, the election resulted in the party's decimation. Stewart also suggests that the defeat of the Pawley government may have led in 1990 to the defeat of the Meech Lake Accord, the federal government's attempt to accommodate Quebec's demands within the Canadian federation.

Just One Vote is well written, even when Stewart takes the reader deep into the world of micropolitics when, in 1986, Walding held onto his own seat and won the party's nomination by only one vote. He really

doesn't answer the question, however, of why the Premier and his senior ministers and officials were unable to manage Walding more effectively, either by finding a way of removing him from the legislature or by offering him something that would ensure his vote.

Stewart does address an issue that has continued to haunt Manitoba politics. In voting against his own party and government, was Walding bought off by the Conservatives or their supporters? The author concludes he wasn't bought off, but voted against his own government because of a combination of ill health, bitterness over not being chosen for a cabinet post, bitterness over almost being denied the NDP nomination in his own riding, and the animosity shown him during and after his term as Speaker. **James A. McAllister**, *Department of Political Science, Brandon University*.